

The impact of vaccines on public health: the role of ESCMID

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Vaccines are a cornerstone of public health, and one of the most cost-effective means of preventing several infectious diseases ranging from acute (e.g. measles and mumps) to chronic diseases (e.g. chronic hepatitis B), and some virus-related human cancers (e.g. liver and cervical cancer).

As part of its multifaceted approach to infections, the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID) strives to promote vaccination and worries that the current lack of knowledge among the lay public and healthcare providers may seriously undermine the efficacy of current and future vaccine campaigns. To achieve this, ESCMID organised the first vaccine-related conference, *The Impact of Vaccines on Public Health*, in Prague, the Czech Republic in March 2011. The conference brought together leading experts from all over the world to debate the many-sided correlations between vaccines, medicine and society at the dawn of the third millennium. The target audience consisted of specialists in infectious diseases, clinical microbiology, paediatrics, hygiene, public health, vaccinology and other related disciplines, as well as physicians in training. As the result of the conference *Clinical Microbiology and Infection* (CMI) published a 16-paper special issue *The Impact of Vaccines on Public Health* in October 2012 (Volume 18, Supplement 5, Guest Editor: Mical Paul).

The success of the first conference encouraged organisation of the second ESCMID vaccine-related conference, which was again held in Prague in March 2013. This was an even more

successful conference which attracted more than 400 delegates. As the result of this conference we have produced this special issue of CMI which contains 17 papers covering a wide range of topics. The topics range from timely reviews of available vaccines and vaccination strategies to phase I results of candidate DNA vaccines.

Both ESCMID vaccine conferences fostered a wide-ranging debate inside the society that led to the creation of an official ESCMID Vaccine Study Group (EVASG). The inauguration meeting was held at ECCMID 2013 in Berlin, Germany. Although a number of other professional societies are dedicated to the field of vaccination, ESCMID strongly believes that our new study group can attract new professionals and that only common collaborative work can lead to success. Anyone who would like to join EVASG can apply to become a member at https://www.escmid.org/research_projects/study_groups/vaccines/. Membership is free for all ESCMID members in good standing.

Transparency Declaration

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